

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/911,394	YAMAZAKI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Mathieu D. Vargot	1732	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to the filing of the application.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-26.
3. The drawings filed on 25 July 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some* c) None of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of
 Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 7/25/01 & 5/6/03
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

Mathieu D. Vargot
Primary Examiner
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1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-26, drawn to a method for forming a film, classified in class 264, subclass 556.
- II. Claims 27-31, drawn to a film, classified in class 428, subclass 1.1.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because:

Inventions I and II are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product as claimed can be made by another and different process, such as one in which the vacuum pulled on the trailing edge of the film is counterbalanced by a positive pressure applied to the leading edge of the film—ie, the three separate decompression zones would not be required with the instant relation between them.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

During a telephone conversation with Ms. Pan on March 5, 2004 an election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-26. Claims 27-31 have been withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

In the claims

Claims 27-31 have been cancelled

3. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Ms. Pan on March 5, 2004.

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The instant claims are considered to be allowable over the prior art of record in that such art does not disclose, teach or suggest the overall aspects of forming a cast film by pulling the film to a support by providing a decompression (vacuum) area made up of at least a middle, left and right portion and wherein the instant relationships between the degrees of decompression in the at least three areas are met.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Metz, Jr is considered to be the closest prior art which discloses that it is known in the prior art to partition the vacuum knife into a plurality of adjacent compartments in an effort to balance the pressure across the film.. However, there is no suggestion of the instant relationships for the pressure in the compartments, which presumably would be equal. The reference goes on to disclose applying vacuum at the edges of the film. Heyer discloses a method for uniform pinning of a film by employing two vacuum zones. Nakamura et al is cited as of interest.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mathieu D. Vargot whose telephone number is 571 272-1211. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri from 9 to 6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael Colaianni, can be reached on 571 272-1196. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

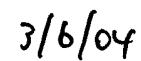
Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should

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you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Mathieu D. Vargot
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1732



M. Vargot
March 6, 2004